

REMARKS

I. Office Action Summary

Claims 69-74, 81-97, 99-103 and 106-119 are pending. Claims 69, 91, 101, 109 and 115 are the independent claims. In the Office Action mailed March 31, 2008, the Examiner maintained the prior rejections of claims 69, 71-74, 99, 101-102 and 106-107 as obvious over the combination of Smith et al (US 5,031,613) and Makhoul et al. (US 5,291,882), and provided a new rejection of claims 69-74. Claims 69-74 are rejected as allegedly anticipated by Smith et al.

Claims 91-97 and 109-119 were indicated as allowed and claims 81-90, 100, 103 and 108 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

II. Interview Summary

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the courtesy extended in the telephonic interview of June 6, 2008. Claim 70 was discussed and no agreement was reached.

III. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Applicant respectfully disagrees with this new rejection of claims 69-74. The Office Action lists this rejection as a §102 rejection, but it is provided in a section designated "Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103". Applicant assumes that §102 was intended based on the text of the rejection. As noted in prior responses, Smith lacks several features recited in claim 69 and its dependent claims. In the §103 rejection discussed below, the Office Action acknowledges that at least the "j-shape" feature is missing in Smith. However, in order to expedite issuance of a notice of allowance for the remaining claims, Applicant has canceled claims 69-74. Applicant reserves the right to refile these canceled claims in a continuation application.

IV. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejection of claims 69, 71-74, 99, 101-102 and 106-107 as obvious over the combination of Smith and Makhoul for at least the same reasons as provided in Applicant's previous response. However, in order to expedite a notice of allowance, claims 69-74 and 102 have been canceled and an amendment has been made to claim 101 to incorporate subject matter indicated as allowable by the Examiner. Applicant reserves the right to refile the canceled claims and unamended versions of the amended claims in a continuation application.

V. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the allowance of claims 91-97 and 109-119, in addition to the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 100, 81-85-90, 103 and 108.

Applicant has amended allowable claim 100 to put it in independent form by including all of the features of its former independent claim 69. Claim 99 has been amended to depend from independent claim 100 in view of the cancellation of claim 69.

Applicant has also amended independent claim 101 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 103 and correct for grammatical issues related to incorporating the language of claim 103. The dependency of claims 81 and 108 has been amended to account for cancellation of claim 103.

Applicant submits that these amendments are fully supported by the specification and that no new matter has been added.

VI. Conclusion

In view of the above remarks and amendments, Applicant submits claims 81-97, 99-101 and 106-119 are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully solicited.

If any issues remain or questions arise, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to expedite processing of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



BRINKS HOFER GILSON & LIONE
P.O. BOX 10395
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610
(312) 321-4200

Kent E. Gehin
Registration No. 37,834
Attorney for Applicant